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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TALLINN 000298

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FOR EUR/NB MIGUEL RODRIGUES

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [RS](#) [GG](#) [EN](#)  
SUBJECT: TFGG01: ESTONIA AND GERMANY CONDEMN RUSSIAN  
RECOGNITION OF GEORGIA DURING MERKEL VISIT TO TALLINN

Classified by: DCM Karen Decker for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. In Tallinn August 26th, German Chancellor Angela Merkel called Russia's decision to recognize the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia "completely unacceptable" and "illegal" and stressed the need to maintain EU unity vis-a-vis Russia. Estonian PM Ansip proposed the EU launch discussions on an EU-Georgia visa facilitation agreement, open negotiations on a free-trade agreement to bolster Georgia's economy and increase the EU's physical presence in Georgia by deploying a monitoring mission. President Ilves asserted Russia has to "feel the consequences" of its actions in Georgia, but suspending the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) or discussions on Russia's WTO accession would "not be enough." Ilves also noted the Georgia crisis has created a "paradigm shift" in security terms. Allies no longer unanimously understand how NATO Article V works; the situation has gotten more abstract. END SUMMARY

¶2. (SBU) During her visit to Tallinn on August 26th German Chancellor Angela Merkel met with both Prime Minister Andrus Ansip and President Toomas Hendrik Ilves. Merkel participated in a joint press conference with PM Ansip and delivered remarks to a large crowd of senior officials, diplomats and others at Tallinn's modern art museum. In her remarks, Merkel called Russia's decision to recognize the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia "completely unacceptable" and illegal and stressed the need to maintain EU unity vis--vis Russia.

¶3. (SBU) On August 27th, Kyllike Sillaste-Elling, Foreign Policy Advisor to PM Ansip and Sven Jurgenson, Foreign Policy Advisor to President Ilves jointly briefed EU and NATO diplomats on the substance of Chancellor Merkel's meetings in Tallinn. Sillaste said the GOE was extremely pleased with the substance of the visit and the high level of international media coverage it had generated (more than 60 journalists participated in the joint press conference.)

What should the EU Do?

¶4. (C) Sillaste-Elling emphasized that Merkel and Ansip had agreed that maintaining EU unity is a priority and that it is important to show "very visible solidarity" with Georgia now. At the Extraordinary EU Summit to take place on September 1, the EU needs to send a clear signal to Russia that its behavior is unacceptable and its decision to recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia is illegal. Merkel said Georgia "needs our support now even more than it did a

few weeks ago." PM Ansip proposed three specific steps the EU could take to support Georgia. (Note: In addition to discussing these with Merkel, the GOE plans to circulate these proposals to EU members for discussion at the EU Council meeting on September 1. End Note.)

15. (C) First, the EU should make a political decision to launch visa facilitation talks with Georgia, Ansip told Merkel. This issue has been on the EU-Georgia agenda for a long time, Sillaste-Elling noted, but talks have not progressed. The EU already has visa arrangements with Russia, Ukraine and even Moldova and the situation is unbalanced. Sillaste-Elling noted that Merkel liked PM Ansip's idea "very much" and agreed that it should be discussed at the EU level. (Note: Merkel also highlighted her interest in this proposal during the joint press conference with PM Ansip following the meeting. End Note.) Second, Ansip proposed the EU open negotiations with Georgia on a free trade agreement. Like the visa issue, this is not a new proposal, Sillaste-Elling pointed out, but one that requires an EU political decision to move forward. The Prime Minister stressed that Georgia needs more, not less, encouragement now, especially in the economic field. The Georgian economy had been doing well prior to the crisis, but the Russians had destroyed Georgian infrastructure and the conflict has had a "severe effect" on Georgia's economy. Reconstruction is one of the things the EU does well, Ansip added. As with visa facilitation, Merkel agreed the idea was worth looking into and the EU should discuss it as a real way to show support for Georgia.

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16. (C) Finally, PM Ansip emphasized the need to consider ways to strengthen the EU's physical presence in Georgia - e.g. through a monitoring mission or other mechanism. Ansip said that while it is beneficial for the OSCE to send people to Georgia, the EU needs to have a strong presence there. Sillaste-Elling explained in her briefing that there are already different ideas under discussion in the Political and Security Committee (PSC) in Brussels, including a proposal by Sweden. One proposal under consideration, she said, is using the EU mission in the Congo as a model for EU monitoring in Georgia. Details still need to be discussed, she continued. For example the EU would need to decide what the task of monitors would be (e.g. keeping humanitarian assistance corridors open or to verifying compliance with the French six-point plan).

What about the Neighborhood?

17. (C) According to Sillaste-Elling, Merkel told Ansip the Neighborhood Policy should be "strengthened." The two leaders discussed the implications of the crisis on Ukraine and other countries in the region and agreed the EU should look at ways to strengthen relations with Ukraine now. Merkel also mentioned (but did not go into detail on) Germany's proposal for the EU to hold a Neighborhood policy conference in Tbilisi and invite other regional actors like Azerbaijan and Armenia. The conference would provide a forum to discuss ways to strengthen EU ties with the region as a whole.

18. (C) President Ilves emphasized to Merkel that the conflict in Georgia has given "new meaning" to the Neighborhood Policy. For some countries, the policy has been a "total failure" Ilves said - there has not been enough "flesh on the bones." Ilves and Merkel also highlighted their specific concerns about the leadership in Ukraine and the potential for conflict with Russia over the Crimea. The president and prime minister (in Kiev) cannot work together and this is damaging Ukraine as well as western efforts to support the country, Ilves said. We have to find a way to get the message to the Government of Ukraine to "get its act together," Ilves told Merkel. NOTE:

The German Ambassador later told DCM that Merkel intended to press for a discussion at the EU Summit of ways to support Ukraine: such as regular and more frequent contact with Ukrainian politicians. END NOTE.

What to do about Russia?

¶9. (C) Ilves and Merkel discussed the need for a two-tiered approach to Russia - focused on both Russia and the surrounding areas. Merkel explained in greater detail the need to provide massive support for reconstruction in Georgia. By providing political and economic support and helping Saakashvili, the West will make sure Russia's "end goals" are not met. Ilves emphasized that it was not a question of "punishing" Russia, but said the West needs to do what is necessary to make Russia pull back from Georgia and not repeat its actions elsewhere. Russia needs to feel the "consequences" of its actions in Georgia but simply suspending EU-Russia PCA renewal or WTO talks would not be enough.

¶10. (C) Ilves told Merkel about an article written by Senator Richard Lugar in 2000 called "Out of Area or Out of Business." In his text, Lugar argued there were no longer any threats to Europe, so NATO had to go out of its traditional area of responsibility. This is not longer true, Ilves told Merkel, there is a new security paradigm in the world now. During the Cold War, Allies unanimously understood how NATO Article V worked. However, the concept has gotten more abstract and Allies have only just begun to think about what this means.

What about MAP?

¶11. (C) Sillaste-Elling said Merkel and Ansip had "some" discussion on MAP. The two leaders had agreed it was impossible to determine whether NATO's decision not to offer MAP to Georgia at the NATO Summit in Bucharest in

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April had any impact on events leading to the current crisis. They agreed, however, that it is Russia, not "certain members of the Alliance" which is behaving badly now. PM Ansip also reaffirmed the Estonia was willing to grant MAP to Georgia in Bucharest and still believes NATO should offer MAP to Georgia as soon as possible now. Jurgenson noted that while Ilves and Merkel did not discuss the timing of MAP, the two had agreed it is important to "look ahead." Ilves cautioned that recent events should be used to accelerate a NATO decision to offer MAP, not hinder it.

PHILLIPS